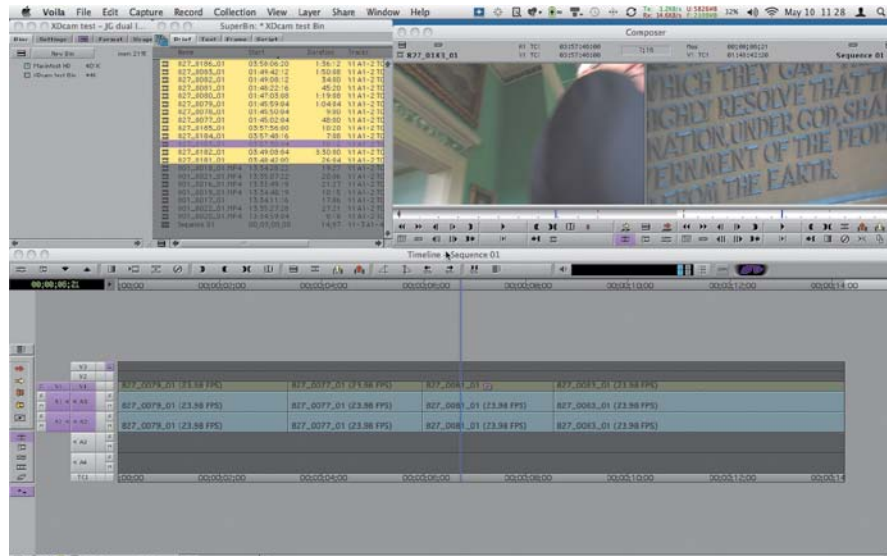


Working with Avid Media Composer

THE AVID EDITING platform is established and entrenched in the world of high-end postproduction. As such, it is common practice for people involved in a postproduction pipeline to interface with Avid tools.

The Adobe Premiere Pro/Avid exchange is a bit of a rocky road. We'll cover the good news first. Sequences translate fairly well. The real hiccup in the workflow is the media. Being aware of these issues should help you to implement an effective workflow.



Adobe Premiere Pro/Avid Media Composer Interoperability



Test First or Pay Later

As with any workflow choice, please test this workflow first with a small project that is representative of your needs. It pains us when clients build a long-form project and pull their hair out over an issue that should have been tested on the first day of production.



AAF Defined

Like XML, AAF is a neutral conversion format meant to transfer data between editorial (and compositing) systems.



MXF Defined

MXF (Materials eXchange Format) is a container/architecture in a similar vein to QuickTime in that it stores media. Although it's used for Avid media files, it's also used for XDCAM, P2, and several other camera formats. Knowing you have an MXF file isn't enough; you need to know the flavor/codec of the MXF file.

By using AAF (Advanced Authoring Format), you can send a sequence to or from Adobe Premiere Pro with Avid Media Composer.

Although this workflow can happen in either direction (to or from Adobe Premiere Pro), it should make sense that it works best early in the editorial process when sequences are mostly straight cuts with few effects. As the editing process moves towards finishing and adding effects, more and more work will have to be rebuilt after a transfer.

The basic process is to export an AAF file from Media Composer or Adobe Premiere Pro, import the AAF file in the other application, and then attempt to relink the media.

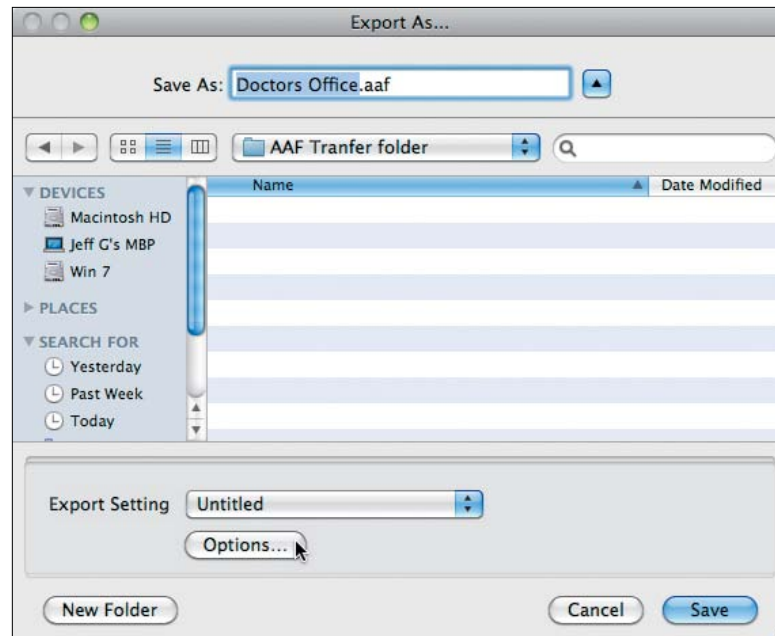
Exporting an AAF File from Media Composer

Before you can import an AAF file to Adobe Premiere Pro, you'll need to generate an AAF file from Media Composer. This will require you or a member of the postproduction pipeline to have access to Media Composer. The media for the project does not have to be online or available if you plan to recapture or relink to it later.

1. Open an existing project in Media Composer.
2. Choose the sequence you'd like to transfer.
3. Choose File > Export. Click the Options button.

In the standard Avid Export dialog is a menu at the bottom that contains templates. The Options button at the bottom permits customization (**FIGURE E.1**).

FIGURE E.1 In the Export dialog, above the Options button, is a menu with common templates for typical Avid workflows. The Untitled setting defaults to AAF.



4. From the Export Settings dialog, choose the following:
 - AAF Edit Protocol.
 - Include all Video tracks in sequence.
 - Include all Audio tracks in sequence.
 - On the Video Details tab for Export Method choose Link to (Don't Export) Media (FIGURE E.2).
 - On the Audio Details tab for Export Method choose Link to (Don't Export) Media (FIGURE E.3).
 - On the Audio Details tab select Include Rendered Audio Effects.
 - (Optional) Include marks—export only between In/Out points.
 - (Optional) Use enabled tracks.



FIGURE E.2 AAF settings for the Video Details.



FIGURE E.3 AAF settings for the Audio Details.

5. Save the AAF file in an easy-to-find location.

Importing an AAF File into Adobe Premiere Pro

After you have created an AAF file, all that remains is to import it into Adobe Premiere Pro. Adobe Premiere Pro will be able to read in the AAF and convert it as best as possible.

1. Launch Adobe Premiere Pro.
2. Create a new project.



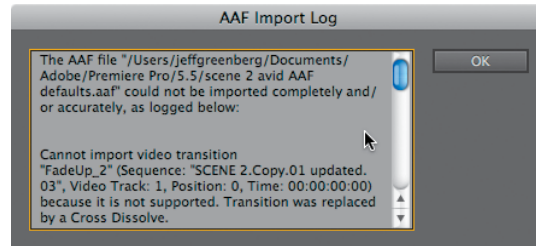
Copy That Text!

There is no other record of the AAF Import Log. So, copy the text into a text processor and save a record of translation issues.

3. Select the Project panel.
4. Choose File > Import.
5. Navigate to the AAF file and click Import.

After the file imports, Adobe Premiere Pro will attempt to automatically link to all the clips. Any problems in the AAF translation will appear in a dialog (**FIGURE E.4**).

FIGURE E.4 The AAF Translation dialog with a log of all the errors based on timecode.



Entire Project?

You can bring across the entire project, but the folder/bin structure won't be maintained, leaving you with a long list of files.

Exporting an AAF File from Adobe Premiere Pro

Exporting an Adobe Premiere Pro project is identical in concept to exporting from Media Composer. Select the sequence in the Adobe Premiere Pro project and choose Export > AAF.

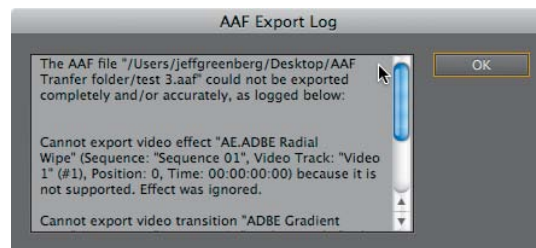


FIGURE E.5 AAF Legacy exists to provide compatibility with older AAF implementations.

1. Open a project in Adobe Premiere Pro.
2. Choose a single sequence in the Project panel.
3. Choose File > Export > AAF.
4. In the dialog choose AAF Legacy (**FIGURE E.5**).
5. Save the AAF file in an easy-to-find location.

Any problems in the AAF translation will appear in a dialog. There is no other record of the AAF Import Log. So, copy the text into a text processor and save a record of translation issues (**FIGURE E.6**).

FIGURE E.6 Don't ignore the AAF Translation results. Knowing what to correct or adjust is a cheat sheet of what to fix.



6. Copy the AAF file onto the same system you plan to edit with Media Composer.

Importing an AAF File into Media Composer

After you have exported the AAF file, all that remains is to import it into Media Composer.

1. Launch Avid Media Composer.
2. Create a new project that matches the sequence type you used in Adobe Premiere Pro.
3. Create a new bin and open it.
4. Choose File > Import.
5. Navigate to the AAF and click Import.

Media Considerations

Adobe Premiere Pro and Media Composer handle media very differently. You need to be aware of the different methodologies, or you'll run aground with unwanted errors.

Adobe Premiere Pro links to QuickTime and AVI files, as well as numerous native camera formats. Relinking is very straightforward. The advantage is that media can be stored everywhere; the downside is that there is no organization or database of your media.

Media Composer constantly maintains a database of all its media in a single folder per hard drive. All media is indexed at all times on all drives. This makes it possible to search across projects, meaning that the user has less worries about media being offline; all media is handled and sequestered by Media Composer.

Media Composer has three different ways of working with media; the most recent is more similar to Adobe Premiere Pro:

- **OMFI Media.** When using OMFI Media, it is stored at the root level of a hard drive in a folder called OMFI MediaFiles. This is a legacy method and should not be used.
- **MXF media.** The use of MXF media leads to media being stored at the root level of a hard drive in a folder called Avid MediaFiles within a folder called 1 where the media (along with a database) is stored.
- **AMA (Avid Media Access).** AMA is a relatively new method of linking to media rather than ingesting media. Media Composer can be pointed to a P2 card, XDCAM, RED folder structures, or a folder full of QuickTime files. This method is very similar to Adobe Premiere Pro and leads to the greatest compatibility.

DNxHD

Unfortunately, at this time, DNxHD via MXF is an unsupported codec in Adobe Premiere Pro.

P2/XDCAM

P2 and XDCAM media store the video in the MXF formats. When Media Composer works with these formats, it merely *copies* the MXF files into its Media folder/database structure. Adobe Premiere Pro can link to these files *if* the raw media files are available.

AMA

Starting in version 3.5 of Media Composer, AMA permitted linking to media outside of Avid's own Media organizational setup. This method of accessing media seems to have the best record of linking to AAFs in either direction. Remember that media in an AMA folder can be anything that QuickTime can handle, P2, XDCAM, and even RED. With QuickTime files, it's necessary to have the appropriate codecs. With P2, XDCAM, and RED media, we've found that having the card, a virtual card (a disk image), or the *exact* card structure has worked in relinking in either direction.

What Translates?

We wish we could tell you that lots of other effects and features work back and forth. But right now, the most important element—your Timeline—translates.

Aside from that, we successfully translated the following other elements back and forth:

- Cross dissolves
- Clip gain (not auto gain)

However, these results are very promising. You're not forced into one application for your editorial work. Although we hoped much more would come across, whether you start in Avid or start in Adobe Premiere Pro, AAF translation will permit easier cross-platform use and will certainly improve in the future.